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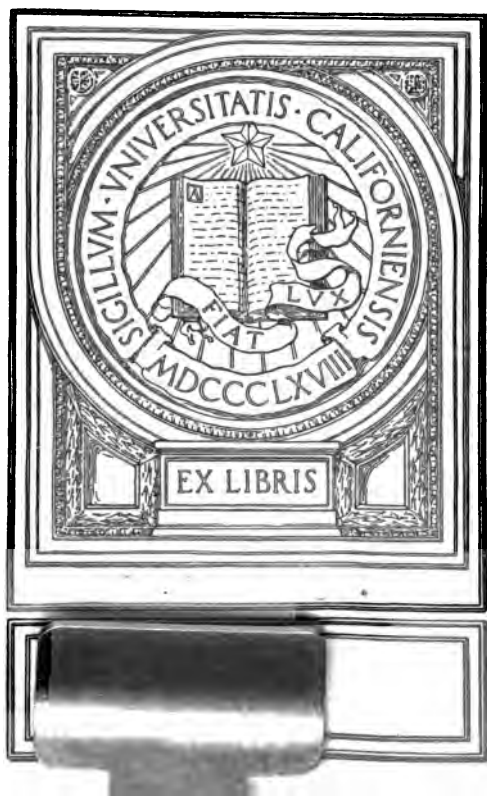
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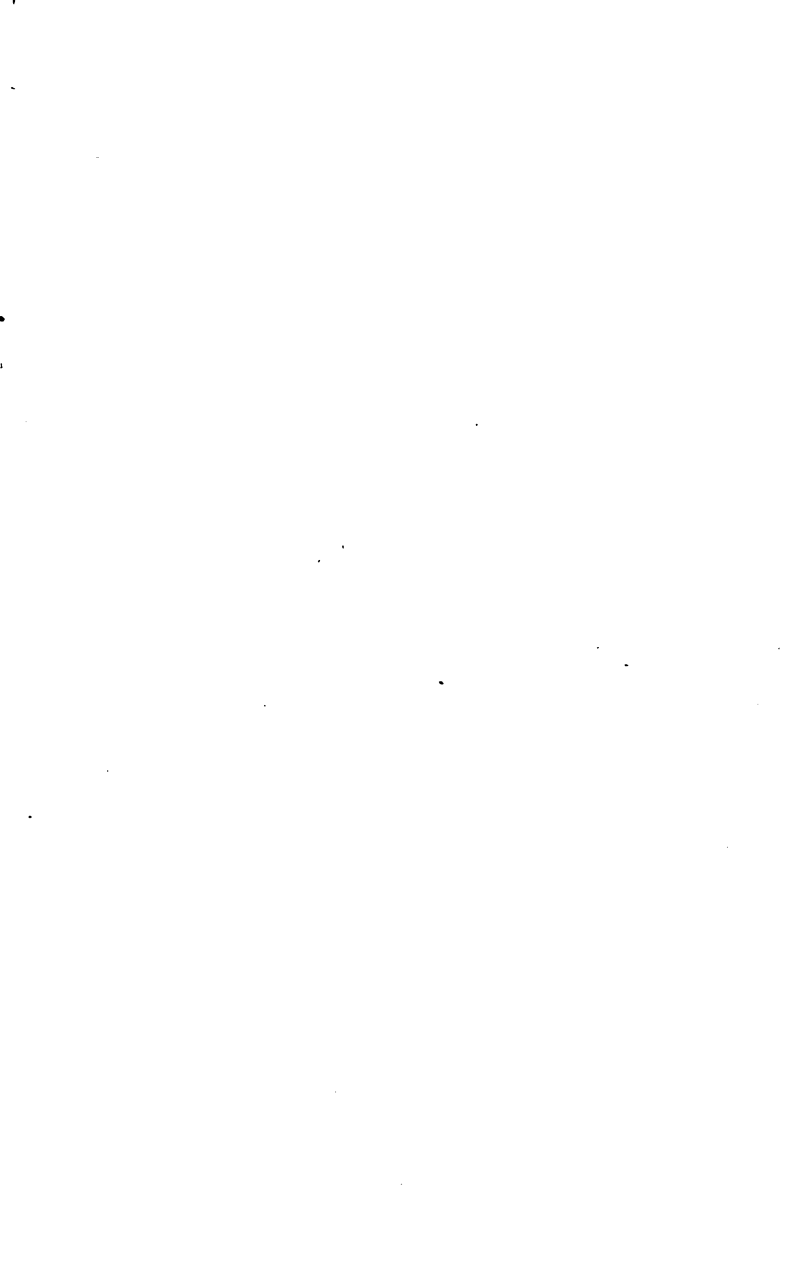


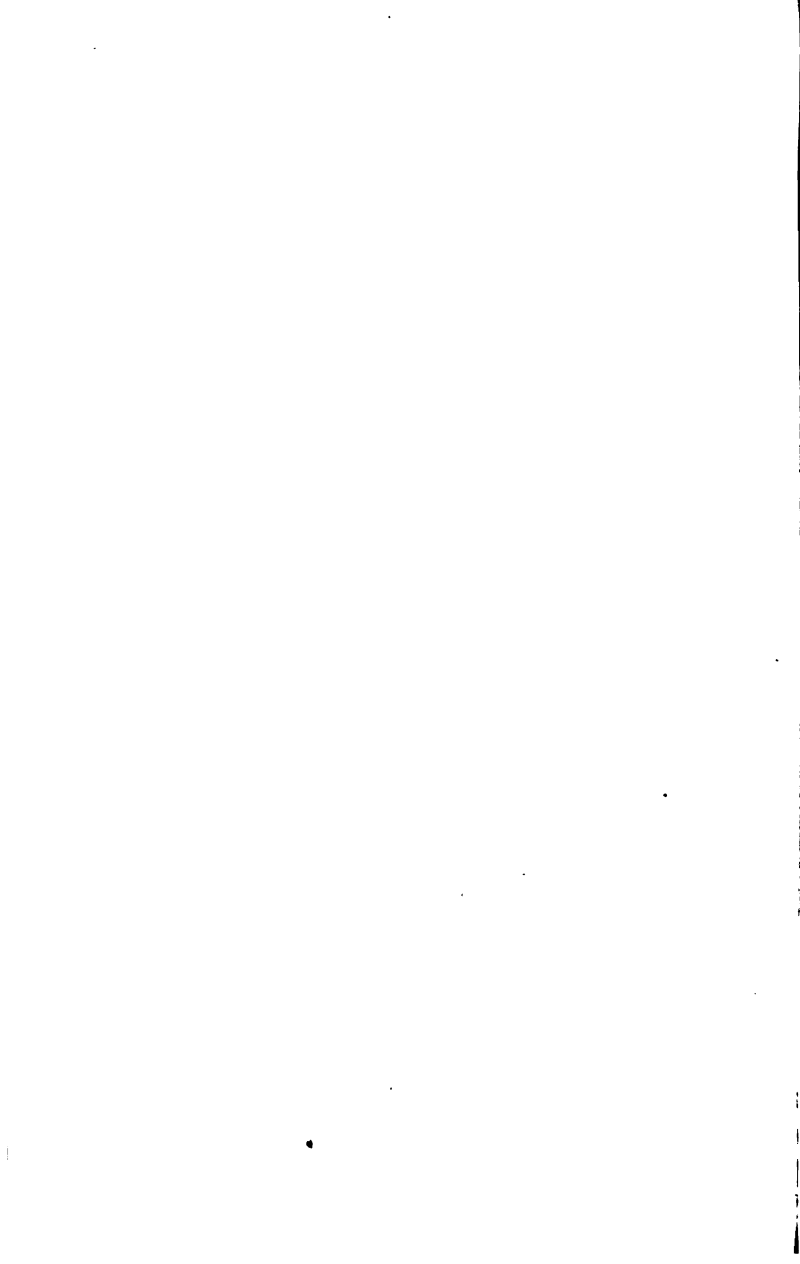
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ARE YOU HUMAN ?

WILLIAM DE WITT HYDE







ARE YOU HUMAN?

*A LECTURE TO THE FRESHMAN CLASS IN YALE
COLLEGE ON THE RALPH HILL THOMAS
FOUNDATION*



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ARE YOU HUMAN?

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

BY

WILLIAM DEWITT HYDE

PRESIDENT OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE

New York

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1916

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INTRODUCTION

CAST into the metal of the bell of my old school, The Phillips Exeter Academy, are these words: — "*Huc venite pueri ut viri sitis*," "Come here, boys, to become men." Kant defined education as "the process by which man becomes man." We are not born men; nor do we come to manhood automatically on reaching one and twenty. To become human we have to take up and fulfill our human relationships.

Of these I have selected the dozen most important. Merely to describe

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them, however, would do little good. Instead, on each of these relations, or humanities, I shall ask three rather searching questions: which, honestly answered, will show you how big or small a man you are; and how much you still have to attain.

My three questions in each case will be: Are you human? or unhuman? or inhuman? The twelve humanities are: athletics, society, science, art, history, philosophy, business, politics, wealth, love, morals, and religion.

In putting these questions first of all to myself I found them very humbling. You may have the same experience. Never mind. Humility, the

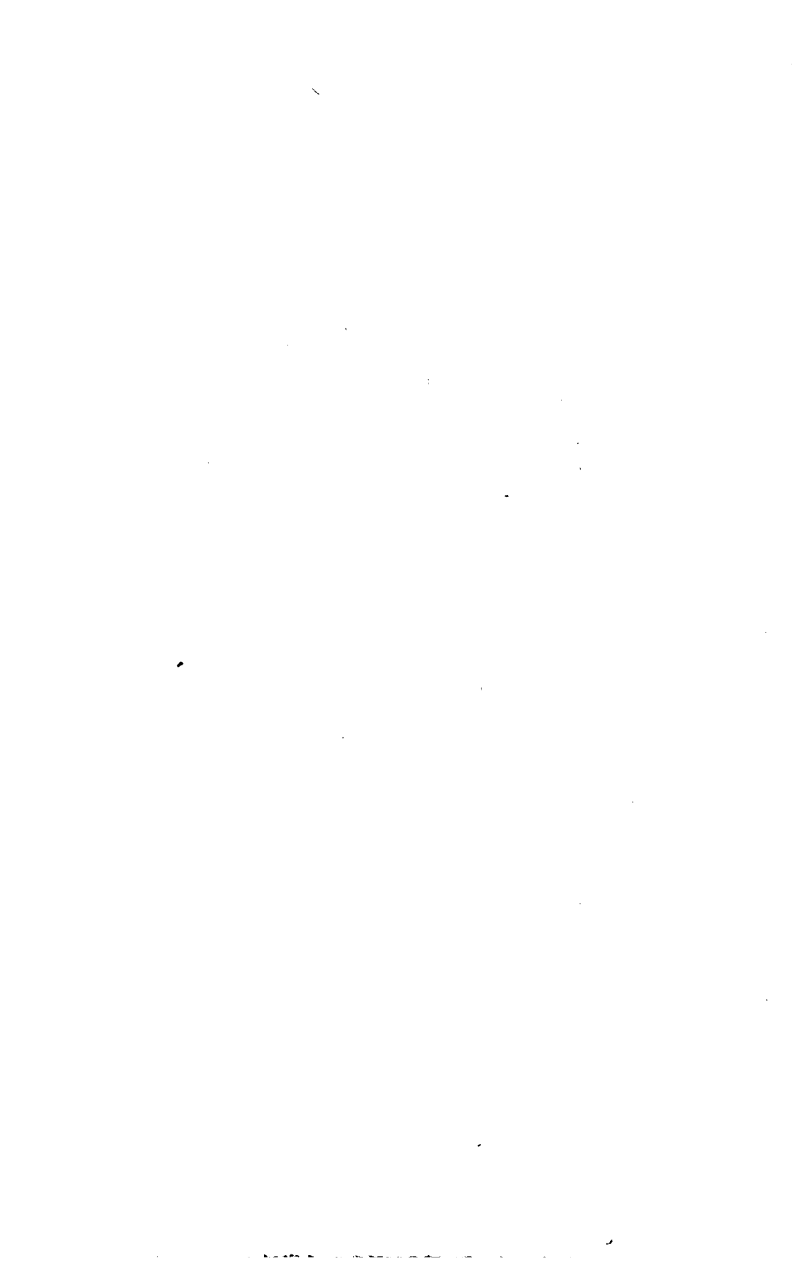
discovery of the greatness of what we are not, and the littleness of what we are, never hurt any man.

Written primarily for Yale Freshmen, I have kept throughout the direct question and the personal pronoun, "You." For we are all Freshmen in the great university of life: and the direct personal question brings out most clearly what boys we still are, and what men we are here in the world to become.



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ARE YOU HUMAN?

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ATHLETICS

To be a complete man you must first of all be an athlete. This is no new fad. Plato in his ideal education for the guardians of his Republic devoted the three years from seventeen to twenty, three of our four college years, to athletics. To be sure he did so on the ground that athletics are so absorbing that one who is taking that training is not good for much else: and then,

Are You Human?

too, men were not to graduate from his proposed school until the ripe age of fifty.

Our common humanity was developed by hunters and herdsmen, fishermen and farmers, explorers and pioneers; men who wrested their subsistence from the forest and the furrow; men who faced wild beasts and savages; men who were the few survivors of the many who went down under these tremendous strains.

This hard-won vigor of the pioneer is lost in a few generations of civilized conditions, unless we develop some artificial substitute for the

Athletics

beast and the savage, the tempest and the plague. That civilized substitute is athletics.

Clerks and salesmen, students and professional men, sorely need to ride and shoot, or hunt and fish, or run and row, or play baseball and football, or at least tennis and golf, if they are to retain the physical features of the humanity so hardly won for us by our vigorous and resourceful ancestors.

Do you then stamp your will through nerve and muscle on the mountain or the sea; a gamy fish or an elusive animal; on the court or links, the river or the cinder

Are You Human?

track, the diamond or the grid-iron?

If so, on this side you are a man, worthy of the sturdy ancestors from whom you are descended.

Or do you shrink from contact with hard conditions, and worthy opponents? Are you content to sit on the bleachers and yell; or lounge in your rooms and smoke; or loaf at the clubroom and gossip and bet. Then your enfeebled constitution, your flabby muscles and unsteady nerves, show that on this side of your nature you are still unhuman — an undeveloped boy, with merely the years and bulk of a man.

Athletics

Or do you weaken your power to resist disease and to stand strain by stimulants, drugs, or unnatural indulgences ; simply for the sensations they give, apart from any normal use they serve ? Then you are inhuman : you are not a man at all, but an overgrown baby prematurely escaped from the nursery ; unworthy of the long line of sturdy ancestors from whom you have degenerated.

II

SOCIETY

BACON tells us that "He who loveth solitude is either a wild beast or a god." As gods are not so numerous nowadays as formerly, Bacon's remark classifies the unsocial man as less than human. We all accept to-day the principle: "*Unus homo nullus homo*" — "One man alone is no man at all."

Do you mingle freely, helpfully, sympathetically with your fellows as host or guest, officer or member,

Society

partner or opponent ; conforming to the little conventions devised to make social intercourse enjoyable ? Do you readily and generously merge your interests in the interests of the company or party, the society or club, the game or entertainment, in which you chance to be ?

If so, you are human on the social side ; and the parties and picnics, dinners and teas you attend ; the clubs, fraternities, circles to which you belong, in a rough external way measure on this side the degree of your humanity.

Or are you too stupid and lazy to master the little conventions that

Are You Human?

bar the entrance to good society? Are you too self-conscious to get out of yourself into happy communion with others? Are you too shy to meet men and women a little more than halfway? Then to that extent you are missing one of the best gifts humanity has in store for you. In self-inflicted isolation and unhappiness you are unhuman.

Or are you a mere climber, trying to "make" this club or enter that circle for your own selfish ends? Are you disloyal, betraying those who trust you? Do you roll as a sweet morsel under your tongue the failings of your fellows? Do you

Society

think not of what you can put into your group, but what you can get out of it? Lowest of all, do you take pleasure in your power to keep other fellows out of the groups that you are in, and glory in your exclusiveness? Is your wealth, or family, or education, or taste, not a magnet to draw less fortunate men to you, but a barrier to fend them off?

Then your snobbishness marks you as unfit for membership in any group of genuine and generous men, and in spite of all the clubs you "make," and the circles into which you climb, brands you as at heart false, hollow, and inhuman.

III

SCIENCE

By the long labor of devoted scientists man has won, or is on the way to win, the mastery over nature. The combinations of the molecules, the courses of the stars, obey the laws of his arithmetic and trigonometry.

The geologist sees in the uplifted mountains and fertile valleys the results of processes essentially the same as those going on to-day; and looks forward to a time when his

Science

knowledge of the structure and constitution of the earth will enable him to predict the location of minerals with something of the accuracy with which the astronomer predicts an eclipse.

The botanist sees in sepal and petal and stamen and pistil modified leaves; and develops new varieties of flowers and fruits and vegetables to suit his taste.

The biologist traces in the human embryo the recapitulation of the history of the evolution of man from lower forms.

The engineer harnesses steam and electricity to his car; and for pur-

Are You Human?

poses of conversation contracts a continent to the dimensions of a single hall.

Can you then, in one or more of these departments, astronomy, geology, physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, not merely in verbal description, but in first-hand manipulation and experiment, retrace these law-abiding processes of nature, these serviceable devices of man? Can you disentangle essential from accidental; and trace the obscure recurring identity underneath the obvious and confusing diversity? Having discovered for yourself law in two or three spheres, do you ap-

Science

proach all scientific subjects in absolute confidence that everywhere, from the smallest atom to the remotest star, there is discovered or discoverable law? Can you call by their names rare specimens; see the law in its unusual as well as its usual workings: predict what will be, and determine what shall be?

If so, you are human on this side; you are a scientific man.

Or do you believe in luck; fear thirteen at a table, and shrink from enterprises begun on Friday? Making due allowance for the control of mind over matter with which it is organically connected, to heal disease

Are You Human?

and increase strength, do you go farther and believe in the merely magical power of mind over external matter, apart from discovered or discoverable law?

Then in your thinking you are harking back to the outgrown childhood of the race: you are childish, superstitious, unhuman.

Or worst of all, do you deliberately stultify yourself? Do you put things together in your mind which refuse to go together in fact, like a man I once met who professed to believe on scientific grounds that Adam was evolved, but was equally clear on Biblical grounds that Eve

Science

was a special creation? Do you try to force these absurd views on other persons? Do you speak disparagingly of scientific truth as compared to ecclesiastical dogmas, and try to maintain incredible creeds by inquisition and persecution? Then you are inhuman: you are the successor of the men who stoned the prophets, burned martyrs at the stake; tormented and persecuted the men who brought new light; and crucified the world's greatest truth-lover.

IV

ART

UNLIKE science, which knows the world as it is and moulds it to man's use, art fashions for man's delight a fairer world than nature ever made. Stones do not grow of themselves into statues and cathedrals; sounds do not arrange themselves in symphonies, nor pigments in madonnas; characters in life are seldom as clear-cut as those of Shakespeare and George Eliot. The spontaneous ejaculations of Tommy

Art

Atkins do not grow into Barrack Room Ballads; nor are the tombstones in any actual cemetery quite as expressive of the lives they commemorate as those in the Spoon River Anthology. Sculptor and architect, painter and engraver, novelist and dramatist, poet and orator, give us a more human world than nature without them could produce—illuminated by a “light that never was on sea or land.” Their works are literally supernatural. For they discard the irrelevant, heighten the significant, concentrate into an instant, or at most a few hours, the quintessence of a

Are You Human?

lifetime, or a cause for which nations have fought for years.

Have you then a great and growing acquaintance with buildings, pictures, plays, novels, poems, songs, which you enjoy and love? Have you favorite artists, dramatists, novelists, poets, musicians, from whom you gain refreshment and expansion, and to whom you seek to introduce your friends?

If so, you are human on the side of art, and are happily at home in this fairest of the humanities.

Or do you live wholly in the world of your own eyes; drudging monotonously in bondage to the

Art

commonplace : the slave of dull routine? Then at this point you are unhuman : you are throwing away the fruits of generations of gifted men in all the arts ; you are selling your birthright of one of the most precious of the humanities for a mess of miserable pottage.

Or, worst of all, do you pervert this human faculty of imagination, the power of creation by selection and concentration, to pick out and gloat over aspects of life which in their proper function and subordination are pure and noble ; but isolated, exaggerated, and emphasized, become vulgar and obscene?

Are You Human?

Do you, as Carlyle says, "dig up the roots of the fair flowers that deck the marriage bower, to show with grinning, grunting satisfaction the dung they flourish in"? If so you are neither human nor unhuman but inhuman: a sneaking degenerate indulging in the secret places of your soul a perverted art you would be ashamed to confess to decent people in the open.

And you will not escape this degenerate form of inhumanity simply by fighting it directly. That often only consolidates and confirms the perversity. Deliverance comes by cultivating noble art and enjoying

Art

good literature: for art is so much more subtle and pervasive than most of man's other interests, that the best way to keep perverse art and perverted imagination out is to bring noble imagination and good art in. As the author of "Ecce Homo" has told us, "No heart is pure that is not passionate, and no virtue is safe that is not enthusiastic."

V

HISTORY

THE animal for the most part is bound to the present. To look before and after, to give the present its setting in past and future, is the prerogative of man; and history is its instrument.

All our human customs and institutions have been dearly bought by the struggles and sacrifices of our ancestors. To retrace the steps by which order and liberty in government, toleration in religion, decency in morals, sincerity in art, have been won; to see the ends

History

customs and institutions now obsolete once served ; to cherish what is still useful, and gently lay aside what has outlived its usefulness ; to get a taste of life lived long ago from first-hand contact with documents and monuments is necessary if we are to escape the narrow span of an ever-vanishing present to which the brutes are chained.

Do you fight over again the debates and battles of the American Revolution and the Civil War ? Do you retrace the slow development of English liberty ; win nationality for their countries with Bismarck and Cavour ; see the splendor and horror

Are You Human?

of the Revolution in France ; dwell in the Holy Roman Empire ; and go back to the foundations of law in Rome, the first flush of civilization in Greece ? Have you rich interests in other lands ; dear friends among the great of long ago ? Do you cherish the civilization you enjoy not merely for its comforts and immunities, but for the heroes and patriots and martyrs with whose lifeblood they were bought ?

Then you rise above the bondage of the animal into the liberty of man.

Or do you live in the fleeting, unilluminated present ; seeing merely

History

the dull, dead facts before your half-closed eyes; forgetting the heroisms and sacrifices out of which they came; and therefore powerless to forecast and shape the forms into which they shall develop?

Then you are merely an animal mind in a human body. You are unhuman.

Or do you in your blind stupidity think what is always was and ever shall be? Do you cling to the old just because it is old; no matter how many facts and needs it fails to meet? Then you are one kind of an inhuman being, — the stupid conservative to whom the present

Are You Human?

is dead and rigid just because the past never was mobile and alive.

Or do you in ruthless anarchism smash everything that fails to work exactly to your liking? Do you discard old creeds because they are not at all points credible; throw overboard political constitutions and safeguards because they work incidental injustice; seek to abolish private property because most workers are underpaid, and some starve; abolish discipline in education because the traditional curriculum has brought down from the past some anomalies, and some schoolmasters have been tyrants or old fogies?

History

Then you are another kind of inhuman being: — the reckless radical, throwing out the baby with the bath: in petulance condemning the 90 or 95 per cent that is sound and useful in ecclesiastical, political, economic and educational tradition, because like all things human they carry their 5 or 10 per cent of waste and slag.

Into one or the other of these opposite inhumanities — stupid conservatism or reckless radicalism — every man is sure to fall who ventures to pass from present to future save through the portals of history, — through an intelligent and reverent appreciation of the achievements of the past.

VI

PHILOSOPHY

ATHLETICS, society, science, art, history, are however only so many fractions of life. Neither of them, nor all together, with business, politics, wealth, and love thrown in, can make us see life whole, and lift us to the eternal point of view. That is the province of philosophy: to see real unity underneath seeming diversity; to discover order in apparent chaos; to unveil mind in the disguises of matter; to throw

Philosophy

the bridges of rational hypothesis across the chasms of blind unintelligibility, — and to do this not in conceited and futile independence, but in all the light the masters of reflection, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, Royce, Bergson, can lend you.

Do you then under some unifying principle, — ideas, energy, monads, reason, will, the thing that works, the vital impulse, happiness, duty, or self-realization, — endeavor to unify the world and give man's life its rational setting in a coherent and intelligible whole?

Then you are taking up the philo-

Are You Human?

sophic side of your human inheritance, and putting a line of demarcation between you and the brutes.

Or do you take life piecemeal: now rising in exultation on the flood of fortune and partial, evanescent success; now going down in despair before some petty, passing misfortune? Beyond the trivial circle of your personal concern is there a hard wall into which you never try to penetrate, before which your thinking stops hopeless and dead?

Then you are unhuman; and superstition lieth at your mind's door.

Or worst of all, being selfish and sensual yourself, do you with the

Philosophy

aid of some Omar Khayyám or Nietzsche make for yourself a philosophy of materialism and irresponsibility; not honestly thought out, but fashioned in the image of your own base desires or arrogant conceit? Do you do for yourself what the ruling class of a great nation has done — make a philosophy to justify your greed and pride: reckless of the ruin it brings on its victims? Do you conjure up or borrow second-hand some fine formula, like the “superman,” or “the law of nature,” or the exemptions of genius, or the supreme rights of passion, to justify your lust and lawlessness?

Are You Human?

Then you are inhuman; you are perverting to ignoble and degenerate ends a counterfeit philosophy; and you will bring on yourself, and all who have the misfortune to be intimately associated with you, some such curse as the deluded disciples of Nietzsche, Treitschke, and Bernhardi have brought on the modern world. You will be not a philosopher, but a sophist.

VII

BUSINESS

ARISTOCRACIES have always looked down on business as material and sordid. With the rise of Christian democracy the tables have been turned; and we now look down with pity on the man who, whether from inherited wealth, or incapacity, will not or can not take his part in the world's work. The man who lives on other persons' toil and enterprise is missing one of the essential human experiences.

Are You Human?

Not until you can produce in quality and quantity, at the time and place where it is wanted, some valuable article or service, are you a full-grown man. To be more served than serving, since Christ came and democracy has interpreted him, is a badge of inferiority.

Do you plan to carry on your business or profession as your little contribution to the great, complicated, beneficent whole? Are you determined to give at least as much and as good as you take? Are you resolved to make your product or service sound and genuine, however fraudulent customers or competitors may be?

Business

If so, your farming, your manufacturing, your trade, your profession will make a man of you — strong with a human strength nothing less arduous and exacting can develop.

Or do you aim by inherited or married wealth to shirk all the hard work of hand or brain ; consuming much, producing little or nothing ? Or if poverty compels you to work, are you bent on doing as little as you can ; treating your work as so much drudgery to be gotten through as easily as possible, with no interest in the process and no pride in the product ? Then you are not a man, but a shirk and a para-

Are You Human?

site. For without useful, difficult, enthusiastic work, paid or gratuitous, public or domestic, man is not man.

Or, worst of all, do you go into business merely to make money, regardless of how, or out of whom, you make it? Do you misrepresent the goods you make or sell? Do you promote fraudulent enterprises, or wreck sound ones by dishonest manipulation? Do you look on business merely as a vast pool from which to scoop out indifferently honest or dishonest gains? Then you are inhuman; and the bigger the business you do on these inhuman terms, the more inhuman you become.

VIII

POLITICS

WITHOUT law, order, government, police protection, military force, and officers to make and execute the laws, society soon would lapse into savagery. To study political science, to form and express political opinion; to support good measures and honest and able men: to run for office yourself as soon as financial independence makes it possible to do so without becoming dependent on the distributors of political favors, — this is the least

Are You Human?

you can do as citizens of a free state.

Do you then know how political policies have worked in the past and are working in other lands to-day? Are you on the lookout for needed reforms in representation, administration, legislation, and government regulation? Is the public interest as precious to you as your own; and the quality of public service as zealously guarded as the efficiency of those who serve you?

Then you are human in your citizenship.

Or do you leave all this to professional politicians, who care as little as you for the public interest,

Politics

but more for what they can get out of the public in salaries and graft?

Then you are unhuman : unworthy of the state that gives you law and liberty, protection and prosperity.

Or are you yourself in politics for what you can get out of it in franchises, discriminations, tariffs, favors, spoils ; seeking to get yourself, or your friends, or your class, supported at the public expense ?

Then you are inhuman ; you are the only kind of traitor the modern state in times of peace and plenty has to fear. Until such men as you are recognized and branded as traitors the republic is not safe.

IX

WEALTH

To make money honestly is often hard, but not so hard as it is to spend it wisely and generously. Yet unless it is invested or spent in ways wisely expressive of one's interests and aims, money is not wealth; and does not humanize its owner. Unused money is a disgrace, showing that its owner has more power than he is competent to exercise.

Do you aim to be a rich man?

Wealth

That question cannot be answered by telling how many houses and lands, stocks and bonds, you hope to have. We must ask further: Do you plan to support a family? help friends? relieve neighbors? promote reforms? pay your taxes as your fair share of the public expense? sustain hospitals, schools, missions, playgrounds?

If so, you are aiming to be a rich man; you are human on this difficult side of wealth: for your money, be it little or much, is the effective expression of a rich and devoted spirit.

Or do you hoard your money, or

Are You Human?

spend it on petty personal gratifications, or run in debt for needless luxuries, or give it away carelessly in response to uninvestigated opportunity?

Then you are a pauper yourself, and a cause of poverty in others. You are unhuman in your misuse of wealth.

Or will you try to make a splurge with your money? Will you buy things you don't care for just for the sake of being seen to have them? Will you live in a bigger house than you can enjoy as a home, or use in hospitality? Will you travel incessantly in restless irresponsibility?

Wealth

Will you allow the workers of the world to do more for you than you do for them?

Then your money will be a curse to you and to all with whom you come in contact. To the extent of the power your money gives, you will make the world a harder, colder, crueller world than it would be if you were dead and buried, and your wealth were distributed among generous and responsible heirs. You are inhuman! Your whole attitude towards money reveals your sordid selfishness and heartless inhumanity.

X

LOVE

WE are persons, and can develop our personality only through other persons. The incidental and superficial contacts with others in athletics, society, business, and politics are not enough to bring out the best in us. We must have friends with whom we share our deepest interests. Yet even friends are not enough. The family, the love of wife and children, the responsibilities and sacrifices of maintaining a

Love

home, are the great agencies for humanizing men. The man who misses that is only half or quarter of the man he was meant to be.

Do you then plan to share life's joys and sorrows with some woman who shall call out all your chivalry, and keep you at your best? Do you desire children with a desire that keeps you clean and sound that you may give them your uncontaminated best? Are you willing to take on whatever economic burden may be necessary to their support and education and start in life? Then you are human with the finest qualities of humanity.

Are You Human?

Or are you too proud or too shy to meet women on frank and friendly terms? Do you prefer club life with its cheap luxury above the struggle to support a family? Then you are unhuman; and outraged nature will inflict her automatic penalty which forbids that so unhuman a person shall be reproduced and represented in future generations.

Or, worst and lowest, do you, while shirking love's responsibilities, in selfish sensuality seize on the physical pleasures nature for her own shrewd ends has linked with love? Do you buy your brief gratification at the cruel cost of the

Love

degradation of some woman, or a whole class of women, and at the risk of disease to yourself and your future family ?

Then you are neither man nor brute ; for the brutes, not having the social standards man has evolved, cannot inflict on one another the fearful penalties human society in self-protection has attached to woman's wrong. You are stabbing humanity at its most delicate and sensitive point ; proving yourself unworthy of the human mother who bore you ; and taking your place below the brutes, with the fiends. For this robbing a woman, or a class

Are You Human?

of women, of their birthright of self-respect and social honor, in return for feigned love or a money fee, is the lowest depth of cruelty and inhumanity to which a fiend in human form can sink.

XI

MORALS

THE customs, rules, laws, and institutions which humanity has evolved for the regulation of life, "the precipitate of mankind's prolonged experiment in living," morals, in other words, are the ways in which experience has shown that men must walk if they will escape hate, strife, war, ugliness, indecency, disease, and untimely death.

Do you put truth above the convenience of lying? honesty above

Are You Human?

the profits of fraud? temperance above the gratification of appetite and passion? Are you bearing your fair share of the burden of maintaining and improving the standards of wholesome, happy human living which generations of self-controlled, self-sacrificing men have laboriously erected?

Then you are human: a worthy member of the company of heroes and martyrs who have made, are making, and shall continue to make the glory of our common humanity.

Or do you act as the crowd acts with which you happen to be? Is your conduct the result of your

Morals

environment? Do you observe law when penalty compels, and break it when you think you can do so and escape detection?

Then you are unhuman: a mere resultant of the physical and social forces that chance to play upon you. You are not a free and original man: but an enslaved, driven thing.

Or do you in open defiance trample on these conditions of common well-being? Do you boast of cheating your creditor out of his dues; glory in successful trickery; tell stories that reek with debauchery and lust; speak contemptuously of truth, purity, honesty and honor?

Are You Human?

Then you are tearing down humanity's most costly structure; undermining the sacred foundations of happiness reared by generations of your human ancestors. You are inhuman.

XII

RELIGION

THERE is only one thing more sacred than morality, and that is religion — the grateful and reverent obedience to the one God who is seeking and serving the welfare of all his human children. Such obedience and reverent service of this Fatherly Will, and the resolute and sacrificial fighting of all that opposes it, is the crowning human experience. Jesus lived that life uniquely and

Are You Human?

supremely ; tens of thousands of his followers, imperfectly but genuinely, are living in that high and holy experience of doing the Father's will to all our brother men.

Do you offer yourself gratefully and reverently, in private and in public, to the service of God and your human brothers ? Do you find hard things made easy in the power of this high fellowship ; heavy burdens made light by the peace it brings ; sorrow turned into joy by the light it sheds on every form of suffering and sacrifice ; loneliness transformed into companionship through this inseparable relation of

Religion

your heart with the great loving heart of the Father?

If so, you are human on the highest plane. You are a Christian man.

Or are God, and Christ, and the Spirit of Christian service, for you mere words without a personal meaning? Are you kind to those you like, or from whom you expect favors; indifferent and cold to others? Do you take life as it comes in broken pieces, making no attempt to bind them together through devotion to the mighty and beneficent purpose you share with God and Christ and all good men?

Are You Human?

If so, you are not an original and creative power for good in the world, to be counted on in times of stress and strain. You are living on the momentum your parents and teachers have given you, — a momentum that is slowly but steadily declining and will leave you spent, empty, worn out, and broken down — an easy prey to the first serious temptation that strikes you un-awares. You are untrenched, unprepared: in the inmost recesses of your soul you are hollow and un-human.

Or last, lowest, and worst, do you by profane or cynical speech, hypo-

Religion

critical or contemptuous attitude, not only stay out of this high fellowship yourself, but keep others from entering? Do you misuse your special gifts and opportunities to pour ridicule on the struggles of the noble men and women who are giving themselves to the service of God through the service of their fellow-men? Are you offending one of these little ones that are trying to live the Christian life?

If so, you are the kind of man of whom Jesus in burning indignation exclaimed, "It is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck and that he

Are You Human?

should be sunk in the depth of the sea." At the highest level humanity has reached, you are not merely negative and unhuman; you are hateful and inhuman.

CONCLUSION

HUMAN, unhuman, or inhuman you must be in every relation of life. If you find yourself human at any point, thank God ; but remember that the only way to stay human is to keep the human qualities in active exercise. To him who exercises the humanity he has, humanity is given more abundantly ; but from him who neglects to exercise it there is taken away the little he seemeth to have.

If you find yourself unhuman at any point, do not be discouraged.

Are You Human?

It is astonishing how much interest and capacity you will discover in yourself for society or art or business or religion, if you associate with persons who have these interests: and try to find the enjoyment they find in them. You will acquire them as you acquire the power to swim or sing: by trying before you can do it; making errors; and gradually eliminating the errors that you make. The grandstand is the only place where errors are not made: and the courage to make and correct errors is the secret of coming to be human; whether in athletics or society, science or art,

Conclusion

business or politics, morals or religion. To refuse to accept our unhumanity at any point as final, is the way to overcome it, and become human. For at every point we are all to some extent potentially human.

If you have found yourself inhuman at any point, that is a much more serious matter. For inhumanity is seldom confined to a single point. It has underground, subconscious roots that spread. To be inhuman at one point is to be in danger of becoming selfish, heartless, irresponsible, and inhuman through and through. There is only

Are You Human?

one way of escape. It is to be ashamed, and sorry; to confess it, and renounce it, and fight it. You need not stay inhuman an instant longer than you choose. The effects on yourself and on others of mean, inhuman acts and attitudes will persist and work cruel harm. But the instant you are genuinely sorry and ashamed, and resolved to renounce it, that instant the fetters of inhumanity drop from your limbs; and you stand up a free man, clothed not in the inhumanity you despise, but in the humanity you admire and strive to become. That is the great Gospel Christ brought to the world.

Conclusion

In the sight of God, of Christ, and of all human men you are not the mean, inhuman being you have been and despise; you are the generous human being you desire to be and shall become. There is hope, emancipation, humanity for the worst man who earnestly desires it. However inhuman you may have been, you are from this time forth as human as you sincerely desire and strive to be.

A parable may make this clear. Three men are climbing a mountain. One, the inhuman man, is near the base. The second, the unhuman man, is halfway up. The third, the

Are You Human?

human man, is almost at the top. Which of the three will reach the summit first? You say the third, the human man. So until the advent of Christ all the world answered. He however said, "You can't tell until you look inside of these three men." Suppose that on looking inside you find the man near the top, the human man, complacent, having seen enough, and standing still. The man halfway up, the unhuman man, is undecided whether to go up or down. The inhuman man, the man down at the base, has his eyes fixed on the summit, and is determined to reach it.

Conclusion

Which of the three will reach the summit first? The man at the bottom, the inhuman man—if he is sincerely sorry and ashamed of his inhumanity, and determined at all costs to be human.

May you be able to say with the Latin poet, "*Homo sum humani nil a me alienum puto*"—"I am a man and deem nothing human foreign to myself." Or better still, may it be said of you at the end:—

"His life was gentle and the elements
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand
up
And say to all the world, 'This was a
man.'"



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